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Sixty-ninth session

8th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 24 September 2014, 6 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

Address by Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zuma: I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your country, Uganda, on assuming, on behalf of the continent of Africa, the responsibilities of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. The theme that you have chosen for this general debate and the sixty-ninth session, namely, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda", is timely and most appropriate.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) galvanized and mobilized the international community and the United Nations in a manner never seen before. We have good stories to tell about the journey of the past 15 years of implementing the MDGS. In Africa, we seized the opportunity and adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), our sociodevelopment blueprint. The African Union's Vision 2063 will, together with NEPAD and other socioeconomic development programmes, be the cornerstone and foundation of Africa's development agenda going forward. South Africa has also made significant progress in achieving the MDGs. Reducing by half the number of people earning less than a dollar a day has been achieved, while the proportion of those experiencing hunger has also been halved. South Africa has attained Goal 2, namely, to provide access to primary education for all.

By official international indicators, South Africa is also doing well on MDG 3 to promote and empower women. South Africa has recorded impressive progress through the expansion of its health infrastructure and improved access to health services for all South Africans.

On the reduction of child mortality, MDG 4, and the improvement of maternal health, MDG 5, significant progress has also been recorded, but more work remains to be done. In fact. more work remains worldwide to fully achieve those goals, especially in the developing world. We have to confront the underlying root causes that continue to make it impossible for our people to have a better life.

In spite of the progress that we have made thus far, reports continue to show that Africa is lagging behind in the attainment of some of the MDGs. It is for that reason that we appreciate the crafting of a post-2015 global development agenda that will carry forward the unfinished business of the MDGs. The post-2015 global

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development agenda will provide a frame of reference for our collective agreement on what has to be done. We reiterate that developed countries should be reliable partners and meet their commitments to development goals, such as contributing 0.7 per cent of their gross national income towards official development assistance. We say that because it does not matter what the great Organization has achieved in the past six decades if we do not deal comprehensively with the scourge of poverty, unemployment and diseases. The poor of the world will then consider everything done to have been a failure. Indeed, we would have failed in our duty if we succeed in preventing another world war but continue to have children dying of malnutrition and treatable diseases.

The recent outbreak of Ebola in some West African States and the number of lives that have been unnecessarily lost provide a clear example of the challenges that developing countries continue to contend with. We believe that Ebola would have been contained within a few days had the outbreak been in the developed world. But now it has become a pandemic that threatens the economies of affected African States.

The outbreak has thus exposed the challenges resulting from lack of capacity, lack of infrastructure and other limited resources in Africa. We are pleased that the United Nations, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, is deploying a mission to coordinate efforts to combat the virus. South Africa stands ready to continue to provide whatever resources we have at our disposal to assist the people and Governments of our sister countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. We add our voice in calling for more resources to be deployed so as to ensure that the virus is contained.

The role of the United Nations in supporting the struggles of self-determination and freedom has been remarkable. South Africa is a shining example. Twenty years ago, President Nelson Mandela thanked all nations for support from this very podium when South Africa was readmitted to the United Nations as a free and democratic State. We are reminded of that fact on this important day, which is National Heritage Day in my country.

Since 1994, South Africa has made significant progress in transforming the apartheid State into a democratic one, founded on the values of human dignity, non-discrimination, non-racialism and non-sexism, the rule of law and universal adult suffrage, as enshrined in the Constitution. Given our history and heritage, we are mindful of our historic and moral responsibility in the global struggle against racism, racial discrimination and other intolerances. We will, in this regard, continue to be at the forefront of efforts to eliminate all forms of racism, racial discrimination and any other intolerance, including xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remain the primary framework adopted by a United Nations conference in the fight against racism. We will continue to support the struggles for freedom and self-determination, including the struggles of the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara, who continue to experience occupation and colonialism of different forms. The people of Cuba also hold a special place in our hearts because of that country's sacrifice for African freedom. We will therefore continue to support their struggle for economic liberation.

While the United Nations has done remarkably well in supporting self-determination, when it celebrates 70 years of existence next year, this body may be found wanting by the people of Palestine. The Israeli-Palestine question is one of the oldest items on the United Nations agenda, but progress remains elusive. In the past few months in particular, the world has witnessed a devastating conflict that left a humanitarian crisis of shocking proportions. People in Palestine were left homeless, with no medical facilities, no safe drinking water, bereaved and having to care for the wounded after a trail of destructive military actions by Israel.

South Africa has condemned the actions of both Israel and Hamas, and we have called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Our strongly held view is that there can be no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian question. We should all remain committed to the two-State solution, based on the 1967 borders, with Palestine and Israel coexisting side by side in peace.

Of concern in this matter has been the helplessness displayed by the United Nations, especially the Security Council during the current conflict. The United Nations has the moral authority and legitimacy to unite the world in promoting the quest for peace, justice and self-determination for the people of Palestine, while addressing whatever security concerns Israel may have. This body must play its role without fear or favour and be a beacon for all who suffer oppression in the world.

Let me reiterate that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations next year provides an opportunity for us seriously to reflect on the need to reform this august body, moving beyond words to action. Ten years ago, world leaders celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations agreed on the need for reform of the Security Council in particular. The decision remains valid and must be implemented. When we convene here next year, in the seventieth year of the United Nations, we should be able to adopt a concrete programme that will guide us towards a strengthened United Nations and a reformed Security Council. Some contentious aspects of the United Nations system, including the power of veto and the exclusion of regions such as Africa from the Security Council, are some of the critical matters that cannot be ignored in the quest for transformation.

Among the achievements of the Organization in its recent history is the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, particularly since the formation of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture. In this regard, the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1809 (2008) and 2033 (2012), on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, remains crucial. Progress has been made in a number of areas where this cooperation is in place, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The two affected subregional organizations, the Southern African Development Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, continue to take significant strides with the support of the United Nations.

This body celebrated the formation of a new State of South Sudan not long ago. Recent developments and the ongoing conflict in South Sudan have resulted in loss of life and other dire humanitarian consequences. We will continue to contribute as much as we can to finding solutions working with the African Union and this body. South Sudan should not be allowed to regress.

Next year marks 20 years since the the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Platform for Action. The anniversary provides an opportunity for the United Nations and the international community to reflect and take forward the struggle for the emancipation of women from all forms of discrimination.

Last December, the world descended on South Africa to pay last respects to our beloved Madiba. Those who did not come to South Africa honoured Madiba in various ways. We will continue to work with the world to promote Madiba's legacy and passion for justice, freedom, equality and human rights. We are grateful to the General Assembly and the President of the Assembly at the sixty-eighth session for the decision to establish the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize that will be awarded to an outstanding individual who will have demonstrated a commitment to the aims, objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter. The Prize is a great testament to the outstanding individual that Madiba was and will always be.

As we recommit to the Millennium Development Goals, let me once again borrow from the words of Madiba uttered on his historic inauguration day in 1994 when he said:

> "We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom. We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success. We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world. Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all. Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves."

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of South Africa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the

Swiss Confederation, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Burkhalter (*spoke in French*):

> "A world in which people know how to solve their problems in peace without violence; a world of freedom and mutual respect; a world where all young people can look forward to finding work that allows them to live a happy life."

That, in his own words, is the world that a young man from my country would like to see. His name is Damian Vogt. He is in this Hall and represents Switzerland's youth at the United Nations. This week we work here together to make that world a reality.

A little more than a year ago, another young person stood in this very place and addressed the world. She said:

(*spoke in English*)

> "I speak not for myself, but for all girls and boys ... Those who have fought for their rights: their right to live in peace; their right to be treated with dignity; their right to equality of opportunity; their right to be educated."

(*spoke in French*)

The entire world still remembers the words of Malala Yousafzai. The entire world still remembers her courage. What a difference in the lives that Malala and Damian have known. What a difference between going to school only at the risk of your life and going to school as a right — the right to a better life. And yet, Malala and Damian, like millions of other young people around the globe, want exactly the same thing: peace, human dignity, freedom and equality, an education, and an opportunity to work. The youth of today have a right to expect from all of us, we who represent the nations, that we truly will be united in our commitment to do everything within our power to place in their hands tomorrow a world where humanity is synonymous with security, freedom and prosperity.

It is a century now since the outbreak of the First World War, and 75 years since the beginning of the Second World War. The memory of those cataclysmic events imposes a duty on humankind to work towards greater security and freedom, to bring about the conditions for prosperity, and to become an Organization of genuinely united nations that is effective as a true assembly of States at the service of the people. Here at the heart of the United Nations, Switzerland wishes to do its part by making the following twin objectives a priority: strengthening international security and reforming the United Nations.

The security challenges are immense. At no time since the Second World War has humankind seen so many people displaced. More than 50 million men, women and children have been torn from their homes. The story of each and every one of them is a human tragedy. Caught up in this current of insecurity are also 75 million young people who, without work, face a future without prospects. We are talking about one young person in 10 in the world, and in certain regions one in two. Worse still, in ever more regions throughout the globe there are waves of instability assailing the rule of international law and, in particular the principles of humanitarian law, which are being ignored, violated, and swept away in the deluge.

This is extremely worrisome in the Middle East, above all in Syria and Iraq. Switzerland condemns in the strongest terms the brutal acts of the self-proclaimed Islamic State and the groups that have allied themselves with it. Islam can, and must, like other religions, be a messenger of peace, humanity and fraternity. As for the nations, they can and must be truly united as a constant reminder at all times and in all places of the supremacy of law over force.

Where serious violations occur, investigations must be carried out. Here, the independent commissions of inquiry play an essential role, especially that of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, to allow for genuine reconciliation and lasting peace. Switzerland and 60 other States have requested the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. We have also committed ourselves to an increase in our humanitarian aid in the region. The crisis in Syria must be dealt with as a whole, and we call on the parties to return to the negotiating table and to work towards a political solution.

Switzerland calls on the Iraqi Government to ensure accountability. It joins the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling on Iraq to consider accession to the Rome Statute.

With regard to all forms of extremism that can lead to acts of terrorism, it is important also to address their root causes to show young people that violence holds out no promise for the future. The establishment

in Geneva of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund was an important step in this direction.

The world in 2014 has witnessed a conjunction of many crises — in the Middle East, in the Maghreb, in Africa, and also in Europe, where war returned this year with the crisis in Ukraine. This situation weakens the security of the entire continent.Violations of the Helsinki principles and of international law, whether in the form of an illegal annexation of territory, such as that of Crimea by Russia, or of military incursions in eastern Ukraine, demand a firm response from the international community. But such a response must also be balanced, leaving room for dialogue and cooperation so that open discussion remains possible. To simply isolate Russia from the rest of Europe will not solve any problems and will only create more, in Europe and beyond. Stability can be restored in Ukraine and in Europe if we succeed in resolving this crisis by working with Russia, not against it.

That stability will be all the more sustainable if the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — of which Switzerland this year holds the chairmanship — is able to re-establish a firm basis for security cooperation between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. Switzerland, in its capacity as current chair of the OSCE, fully supports the vital work of the contact group for Ukraine and Russia. We are currently taking steps to increase funding for the special civil monitoring mission, that will also require additional support from the participating States, and we welcome the excellent cooperation with the United Nations.

In today's unstable world, Switzerland has made an active commitment to achieving greater security by focusing its efforts there where it can make the greatest contribution — the prevention of conflicts. The prevention of violence means, first and foremost making certain that a proper education is available to all and that there are opportunities for every young person. We welcome the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative. Switzerland is working to promote education through massive open online courses and seeks to encourage the development of dual vocational training, combining school studies with on-the-job apprenticeships. This calls for a joint commitment on the part of the State and the social partners.

In addition, preventing tensions from arising requires knowing how to give everyone a voice. At the heart of Switzerland's history lies a willingness to share power, to engage in direct dialogue with minorities, and to distribute authority between central and local government — an emphasis on consultation rather than on confrontation. In order to better prevent and manage tensions in the world, we must strengthen the mediation capacities of both the United Nations and regional security organizations, particularly those of the largest among them, the OSCE.

Switzerland has decided to augment its contributions to international development and humanitarian cooperation. In the coming year we will be allocating funds for this purpose amounting to the equivalent of 0.5 per cent of our gross national income. In other words, to help the neediest inhabitants of our planet, each person in Switzerland will be contributing a little over one dollar every day.

The post-2015 process provides us with the chance to transform the world's challenges into opportunities. There must be a single agenda for universal sustainable development, with shared objectives. We must all act to ensure that they are truly achieved. If all nations are genuinely united, it lies within our power to make certain that no one in the world need face a future of destitute poverty. It is within our power to make certain that the creation of jobs and wealth, and thus also companies doing business contribute to the development of human rights and help to foster respect for the limited resources of this Earth.

Today there are crises that cannot wait for the outcome of discussions on an agenda, no matter how sustainable it may be. Switzerland has increased its humanitarian commitment to the fight against the horror of Ebola. Swiss-based research centres, among the best in the world, are working to arrange for the clinical testing of vaccines. Similarly, we must also do all we can every day to protect the world's youth from the horrors of war. The place of children and young people is in school and with their families and not on the battlefield. Switzerland is intensifying its efforts to provide better health protection for women, especially young girls, and has also launched an action plan to combat the phenomenon of child soldiers, who are being deprived ofthe right to be simply children.

In order to meet these challenges we will need not only the common will of the United Nations but also an organization that functions in an effective, transparent, and democratic fashion. "We the peoples of the United Nations" are the opening words of the United Nations Charter. They are a reminder that the United Nations must first listen to and serve the people of this world.

In concrete terms, this means that it must strengthen bodies that are dedicated to the prevention of conflicts. Switzerland applauds the initiative of the Secretary-General to strengthen the commitment of the United Nations to human rights, particularly in sensitive regions. My country has launched an appeal for the allocation of additional funds for those important activities.

There is also a need to strengthen the United Nations special political missions to prevent conflicts and reinforce the activity of the Peacebuilding Commission. The United Nations must devote all its energy to its work in the field to serve the people. It must avoid getting lost in an administrative maze. Together with eight other countries, Switzerland has commissioned a group of experts to draft recommendations for the reform of planning and budgeting processes.

Lastly, the ability of the United Nations to be effective in dealing with the challenges it faces depends on the legitimacy it enjoys as well as its ability to be transparent and inclusive in the Security Council. The permanent members ought not to use their veto to block action designed to prevent or put an end to genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes. Switzerland welcomes the French initiative for a voluntary agreement by the five permanent members to restrain their veto power in cases of mass atrocities.

One day, many years ago, a young man travelling across the north of Italy was horrified by the suffering he witnessed on the battlefield at Solferino in the 1800s. The young man's name was Henri Dunant. With the help of local women, he cared for the wounded soldiers. Later, when he returned home to Geneva, he dedicated himself to raising public awareness of the tragedy that had taken place. Through his commitment, the Red Cross Movement was born. Through his persistence, the first Geneva Convention was signed, 150 years ago in 1864. This document — which I am holding up here and will give to the President of the General Assembly — is a reproduction of the original, in which States committed themselves to providing assistance to wounded soldiers and ensuring respect for humanitarian principles. Thus, international humanitarian law was born.

Yet today, 150 years later, humanitarian law is too often violated or ignored. Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross were given a mandate to consult States and to issue recommendations. We will present next year a specific proposal to strengthen respect for humanitarian law and to put in place some joint machinery and an institutional framework. For the past 150 years, the spirit of Geneva, the spirit of international law, has shone forth throughout the world like a beacon, a place of peace, a home to humanitarianism and a refuge for humankind. Geneva is a gift, both for Switzerland and for the world, and we would like to strengthen its role further by finding useful solutions for humankind. Like Malala and Damian, Henri Dunant dreamed of peace, freedom and prosperity for the world. His story — the story of the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions — is a message of commitment. The action of each one of us can make a difference.

In a few days, Switzerland will rename one of the highest mountain peaks in the Alps. It will henceforth be known as Dunant Peak, after Henri Dunant, the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Here, where the nations come together, we have the power to move mountains, as long as we stand united, working together to make the dreams of Damian and Malala and all young people in the world a reality. We owe them a better world. We are capable of building that world together, if we find the will to work as nations truly united in dialogue and action — united nations, whose Governments draw their strength from the people, for the people; united nations who draw their inspiration from the youth for the youth.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Swiss Confederation for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Deby Itno (*spoke in French*): The sixty-ninth session offers us a theme that invites us to deepen

exchanges on the development model that we want for the world post-2015. The theme, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda", is perfectly in line with the theme of the sixty-eighth session, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage".

At previous sessions, we have acknowledged that development through the achievement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has not produced the expected results for many States. Among the main causes for this are the weakness of solidarity in financing the Goals; their poor adaptation to the concerns and realities of Africa; and the many global financial, food, environmental and security crises that arose. The unanimously welcomed drafting of a post-2015 agenda gave us the opportunity to review the MDGs in greater depth and to respond relevantly. Africa, for its part, has adopted a Common Position that requires the adherence of all States and their partners. This Common African Position is part of the Africa Vision 2063. That is why my country, Chad, fully supports it and hopes that this approach will figure prominently in the post-2015 agenda.

Unfortunately, we note that on the eve of the important post-2015 meeting, the same security risks remain. Armed conflicts and the phenomenon of terrorism are becoming persistant threats in several areas of Africa. They are aggravated by the migratory phenomenon that deprives our continent, Africa, of its workforce. We must therefore join our efforts to bring adequate and energetic responses to these phenomena, which dangerously compromise the future of our continent.

I take this occasion to hail the upsurge of solidarity that we are witnessing on the part of the international community in combating terrorism and underdevelopment. Africa remains in favour of various strategies for security and development in the Sahel initiated by the United Nations, the European Union and many other organizations. We hope that the implementation of these programmes will be effective so as to allow our continent to effectively combat these ongoing phenomena.

Beyond international support, these security challenges require African countries to take their security into their own hands by implementing laws that will ensure security at the national, regional and continental levels. The countries of the Sahel — Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad — have mobilized through the Group of Five countries of the Sahel to combine their efforts in building a strong system of resilience, good governance, security and peace. It is well known that the security of one country or region is directly linked to its development, that of its neighbours, and thereby to that of the entire continent.

The terrorism summit convened by the African Union Peace and Security Council, over which we presided on 2 September in Nairobi, was a part of these constant efforts. It sought to consider in depth the terrorist threat and to agree specific and concrete measures to consolidate the efficacy of collective actions against this scourge. The summit also gave us the opportunity to highlight our solidarity with Kenya in particular, and more generally with the East African region, which is facing the threat of the terrorist Al-Shabaab group.

The decision to create such mechanisms as the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises or the African regional force for the Sahel-Sahara and Central Africa, was the fruit of this regional and continental resolve to respond appropriately to terrorism, which is progressively gaining ground in Africa. We call on the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to take the necessary measures to bring the joint multinational force into operation in order to combat the terrorist activities of Boko Haram.

With respect to conflict resolution, Chad continues to contribute to peace and reconciliation in Africa. This goodwill is borne out by the organization on its territory, at Amdjarass in the north, of a forum of peace and reconciliation between the warring brothers of Darfur. Chad welcomes the holding of the Brazzaville forum on reconciliation and inclusive dialogue between Central African brothers, where it played an active part in seeking solutions to Central African crises.

My country welcomes the inter-Malian dialogue towards a definitive return to peace and security in that country. It welcomes the reconciliation process under way in South Sudan to persuade the South Sudanese to take up the peace pipe. We are convinced that sincere dialogue and surpassing ourselves are virtues that can assist in resolving these issues. My country will continue to support this process of dialogue and reconciliation.

Regarding the new Libya — a country that has barely begun to exist as a homogenous entity after the fall of the Al-Qadhafi's regime and his assassination — the

violence has intensified and the people live in constant fear. Libya's neighbours are striving to assist that brotherly country to recover its stability. The entire international community is called upon to act on the severe security situation in that country. Libyan brothers of different political and social beliefs must understand that peace can come only from the Libyans themselves. They must therefore resolutely commit to a political settlement, the only proper path to ensure peace, unity and territorial integrity for Libya.

Chad, a neighbouring country of Libya, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and Nigeria, is hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons who have fled armed conflicts or terrorist threats. Since 2003, we have welcomed more than 500,000 refugees from these neighbouring countries and more than 200,000 Chadians repatriated from Libya and the Central African Republic for security reasons, including displaced Chadians. A national plan for global response developed by the Government and its technical and financial partners has been adopted and is being implemented, but it requires the financial and material support of the international community.

These various conflict situations are compounded by other, no less important challenges such as poverty, underdevelopment and illnesses. I note in particular the severe Ebola crisis affecting certain countries on the African continent, ravaging populations and gravely affecting the economies concerned. Chad will make its financial contributions to these countries. The international community must act, and act quickly, in a coordinated manner as the Ebola virus knows no borders. I commend the upsurge of solidarity on the part of the international community in containing the spread of this scourge.

Beyond Africa, we call for a peaceful resolution to the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, and between Israel and Palestine, to name but a few. On Palestine specifically, we feel that the disproportionate use of force and the human and material damage incurred in Gaza are unacceptable and challenge the human conscience. It is extremely urgent to find a solution to this conflict, which has lasted for far too long. We therefore call on all parties for restraint and dialogue in order to reach a just, global and lasting solution.

Regarding the embargo to which Cuba has been subject for many years, we once again reiterate our call for it to be lifted, pure and simple.

Peace, stability and development are intrinsically linked to respect for laws and universal shared values, of which justice is the basis. Nevertheless, we note with regret that these universal principles are not often respected, especially by the powerful of this world. This is the case for the International Criminal Court, which, instead of being neutral, impartial and independent, seems more to practise double standards and only pursues the weak. Some 90 per cent of indictees are Africans.

The debate on the reform of the Security Council must be concluded, taking into account the interests and concerns of all States so that it reflects the actual makeup of the world. It is unjust that a billion inhabitants live in the only continent without a permanent representative in that organ.

At the national level Chad has a national development plan for 2013-2015 and a national programme for food security which seek to ensure resilient and emerging development by 2025, supported by sustainable and diversified sources of growth that create added value and employment. The plan ensures that each Chadian has appropriate access to basic social services, decent housing and to adequate training opportunities. I again thank all our partners who announced their participation in financing these two programmes at the Paris conference in June.

In order to promote a serene climate in national political life Chad has implemented mechanisms for political governance, the latest of which is the national framework for political dialogue created in April 2013. This mechanism is better adapted to current political events as it includes civil society along with political parties. These mechanisms have led to stability conducive to economic and social development in a country where challenges remain considerable.

To improve governance, Chad has adhered to the monitoring mechanism of the African Union and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. That adherence clearly demonstrates our resolve to manage our national resources in complete transparency. Chad will continue to work to consolidate the rule of law and good governance through substantial reforms of its institutions, to combat unemployment by creating jobs for youth, and to combat poverty and food insecurity.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Chad for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Estonia.

Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ilves: In the 364 days since I last had the honour to address this Assembly, the world has changed dramatically. We have seen a profound change in the global security situation. We see unprecedented threats to peace and security in post-Second World War Europe and the world, while terrorism, climate change, human rights violations and the spread of the Ebola virus continue to be global challenges.

We need a concerted effort to achieve peace and stability in Europe and the Middle East, and to restore the credibility of international law. No circumstances can ever justify terrorism in any form. By signing United Nations anti-terrorism conventions States have promised to prevent and investigate terrorist crimes as well as to refrain from supporting or tacitly tolerating those crimes.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) poses a serious threat to the people of Iraq and Syria as well as the broader Middle East. This terrorist organization executes prisoners, kills civilians and commits genocidal acts against religious and national minorities. Its brutality, barbarous crimes and extreme ideology threaten all of humanity. It challenges the universal human values enshrined in United Nations documents. We must stop the terrorists. Estonia commends all global efforts to fight the ISIL and other terrorist organizations and stands ready to contribute to those efforts. I should like to welcome the adoption today of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014), on foreign terrorist fighters.

A quarter of a century ago in the annus mirabilis 1989, Europe and the democratic world celebrated an historical sea change. The Berlin Wall fell. The Cold War that had divided the world into hostile camps for half a century ended. This year we should celebrate an anniversary of the triumph of freedom and democracy. Instead, 2014 has turned out to be a year when the international order as we have known it since the cold war, has been violated and put in doubt. Cynical geopolitics in international relations has once again come to the fore. The international agreements upon which the stability of the post-Second World War security architecture relied, have been compromised.

Let me recall what we have collectively agreed upon. The Charter of the United Nations of 1945 declares:

> "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state".

In the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, all trans-Atlantic countries agreed not to use force to change borders or challenge the political independence of any State. States agreed to regard one another's frontiers as inviolable; to refrain from making each other's territory the object of military organized occupation. No such occupation or acquisition would be recognized as legal. In the 1990 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Charter of Paris for a New Europe, all signatories, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, agreed to "fully recognize the freedom of States to choose their own security arrangements".

By annexing Crimea and invading Eastern Ukraine, one of the signatories has violated all of these agreements. Thus, we find ourselves in a completely new and unforeseen security environment. We must enforce the fundamental agreements upon which our peace and security rely.

The Ukrainian crisis is not solely a conflict between two countries. It is not even solely a European issue. If instead of agreements and laws raw brute force will apply in international relations; if changing State borders by force will become an accepted norm, then the stability of the whole world is threatened. As President Obama said this morning, "This is a vision of the world in which might makes right" (*A/69/PV.6, p. 11*). And he added, "We believe that right makes might" (*ibid.*). So does Estonia. We believe that too.

Such developments must be firmly condemned. The international community cannot leave Crimea as it is now. We cannot accept frozen conflicts created for geopolitical ends. Referendums that are in agreement with international law cannot be arranged in two weeks in the presence of foreign armed forces. The results of such referendums cannot be considered valid. Independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity must remain the fundamental rights of States and nations. That includes their right to direct their own future and to choose their allies, as stated in the CSCE Paris Charter. Such free choices by sovereign nations cannot be accepted as an excuse for aggression. However, it was not Ukraine's wish even to choose its security arrangements that was used as justification for aggression. Its mere desire to enhance trade and political relations with the European Union, which is not a security arrangement, led to the country's dismemberment.

What can we do, then, to restore the validity of international agreements? There were warning signs of current events in Ukraine earlier. Alarm bells rang already six years ago in Georgia, but few bothered to hear the wake-up call. We must take, therefore, conflict prevention more seriously. We must support States in their choice of democracy, the rule of law and human rights and decisions that follow from that. These recent developments force us seriously to reconsider the role of the United Nations. How can one of the fundamental goals of the United Nations, global peace and security, be promoted when basic international agreements are ignored, State borders are changed, and territories are annexed through force?

We cannot ignore that the Security Council has been paralysed as international justice has been manipulated and multiple crises have escalated. The Security Council needs to be reformed. Its work methods and principles must be revised, with special attention on the openness, accountability and transparency of its processes. The permanent members of the Security Council bear enormous responsibility in guaranteeing international peace. No permanent member should abuse the veto to circumvent the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Human rights remain the most cherished of values of the United Nations. Unfortunately, respect for human rights can still not be assumed to be the norm. We cannot accept arguments that for some countries human rights do not apply for cultural reasons. Human rights, as stated in the Universal Declaration, are universal, inalienable and inviolable. They are based on the humanity and dignity of each and every person.

No peace or justice, stability or security can be guaranteed unless the basic rights of all human beings are respected and protected in every country by all Governments. We must, moreover, pay special attention to the rights of the most vulnerable groups. Women's rights must be protected everywhere. It is crucial that empowering women and action against gender-based violence be implemented in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We must respect the rights of children and minorities, as well as those of indigenous people. We must care for people with special needs.

Free speech remains a crucial right. Some States have made efforts to stop the free flow of information on the Internet and to divide cyberspace along State borders. This we must avoid. The Internet must remain a universal platform for the uninhibited exchange of information. Estonia is proud to be a founding member of the Freedom Online Coalition, a community of 23 nations committed to promoting free speech online, and the multi-stakeholder model of a free and open Internet. It is a global initiative that brings together Governments, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs and think tanks.

In April, the Freedom Online Coalition gathered in our capital and issued the Tallinn Agenda, a statement expressing our strongly shared conviction that all people are entitled to the same rights and freedoms, online as well as offline. This is not a lifestyle question. The Internet is a driver of economic growth and a key tool for development. Since the 1990s it has blossomed into a global network of nearly three billion users. Most of the next billion Internet users will come from developing countries. The United Nations post-2015 development agenda should recognize the importance of new technologies and e-services as a major contribution to the security and prosperity of the world. As we grow more dependent on digital services in our daily lives, we become more vulnerable to cyberattacks. Cyber security is essential, not just for protecting rights, but also for economic prosperity. Cyberattacks can paralyse crucial services or infrastructure. They can cause enormous economic damage. Limiting access to, or censoring the contents of the Internet, however, is not the answer to cyber insecurity.

Achieving sustainable development is essential in order to tackle some of the challenges we face. Even in the current fragile security environment, we must take care of the future of the planet and work towards a world where everyone can live a dignified life, free from poverty, violence and exclusion. In today's interdependent world, this is hard to achieve without peace and stability.

The world today also faces the outbreak of a deadly virus. This is no longer a local concern of a few countries. Ebola has become an international public health emergency. Despite efforts already made by Governments and international organizations the outbreak races ahead. We support the efforts of the Global Ebola Response Coalition tasked to contain and stop the spread of the virus.

Climate change is already an existential threat to some countries. It has a dramatic impact on their living conditions and their security. The small island developing States are most vulnerable. If we do not act soon enough other countries will be threatened as well. We must see this problem globally, not just from the perspective of short-term national or economic interest.

The risks of conflict, violence, insecurity, financial and economic collapse, climate change, lack of resources and natural disasters are inextricably intertwined and need to be addressed comprehensively. The new post-2015 development agenda must be truly universal. Sustainable development goals are best addressed together. Progress in these fields will be guaranteed by good governance, transparency of decision-making and low corruption. Effective and accountable institutions are powerful enablers of sustainable development, and modern digital technology helps us to create them. In Estonia, we have developed an e-governance system that increases transparency and limits corruption. We have been sharing the system with all interested partners and we continue to be willing to do so.

Since 8 May 1945, we have believed that we had been freed of certain ideological demons for good. Yet today we see the return of long-discredited ideas dating back to 1938. The existence of co-ethnics abroad has been used as a justification to annex territory. This is in 2014, not in 1938. So, too, we have seen a return to the ideologies of hatred, lies and propaganda. We must be clear in condemning extreme nationalism, homophobia, xenophobia and religious extremism. We need to recall and reaffirm the values that the United Nations was created to protect. The United Nations, a unique global instrument of security and peace, must succeed where the League of Nations once failed.

Let us not forget that 75 years ago, on 23 August 1939, a pact was signed between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to divide Eastern Europe into their spheres of influence. A week later, on 1 September, Hitler attacked Poland. On 17 September, two and a half weeks later, Hitler's erstwhile ally, the Soviet Union, also attacked Poland, and the Second World War had begun.

The date of 31 August this year marked 20 years since the occupation forces left Estonia — troops that were there as a result of that same Stalin-Hitler pact. Yet just a few days later on 5 September, an Estonian police officer was abducted by foreign security services on Estonian territory and taken by force to Moscow, where he is still being held in the infamous Lefortovo prison.

We cannot allow anyone ever to divide countries into spheres of influence. The community of nations is only secure when its smallest members can feel secure. We cannot and will not accept threats and intimidation in twenty-first century international relations. We cannot have peace, security or prosperity in Europe, or in the world, unless we again find a way to enforce and revalidate the agreements that we have all signed and are parties to.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Estonia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*spoke in Spanish*): I bring with me to this session of the General Assembly greetings of peace, friendship and solidarity from the people of Equatorial Guinea and the full readiness of their Government to contribute to our common task of maintaining peace and stability throughout the world, and promoting the harmonious development of humankind.

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your brilliant election to preside over the work of this sixty-ninth ordinary session of the General Assembly. Your well-deserved election is justified by the policy of peace, respect for the principles of international law and the promotion of development advocated by your country, the Republic of Uganda. Indeed, your decision to devote this session of the General Assembly to the theme "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda" is testament to Uganda's interest in overcoming the current problems of underdevelopment throughout the world.

Equatorial Guinea recognizes the relevance and importance of the topics to be debated at the two high-level meetings proposed for 2015 — one in February, to consider ways of implementing the post-2015 development agenda, and the other in March, on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We also wish to convey our sincere appreciation and congratulations to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his outstanding work at the head of the global Organization in very difficult international circumstances marked by terrorism, piracy, mercenary activities and major epidemics affecting the world today. Indeed, this session of the General Assembly bears the heavy responsibility of finding solutions to the problems of the poverty and hunger prevalent throughout the world, violence and armed conflicts, terrorism, piracy and mercenary activity, and major epidemics, such as the recent Ebola epidemic that is now laying waste to some countries in Africa. Given Ebola's deadly effects and the lack of adequate resources to combat it, on the occasion of the award of the second UNESCO Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in Life Sciences, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea announced a donation of $2 million to the World Health Organization to finance programmes to combat Ebola.

The United Nations will not be able to find solutions to these thorny problems unless the role of the General Assembly, which in recent years has grown routine, is strengthened and revitalized. The United Nations will never be able to find lasting solutions to these problems if the Security Council is not governed by rules that respect the spirit of democracy and international justice. Ultimately, the United Nations will not be able to find satisfactory solutions to these problems as long as the current system of the rule of force in international relations persists.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is therefore very concerned by the proliferation of acts of intervention that do not respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. These interventions interrupt the process of genuine democracy in the affected countries in that they ignore the essential characteristics and idiosyncracies of those societies, thereby further fuelling divisions and the sociopolitical instability of nations. We must distinguish clearly between support for a genuine internal democratic process and interference perpetrated through pressures that lead to misunderstandings, intolerance, exclusion, resentment, hatred among citizens and fratricidal wars.

In Equatorial Guinea we say that democracy is not an imported product and cannot be designed in the offices of other countries. Democracy is shaped by the application of the positive values characterizing a society, and only the people are entitled to define the model that best suits them and to beat their own path towards their own development. With this as our vision, in 1982 the Republic of Equatorial Guinea adopted the theory of democratic experimentation, which gave our own citizens, through community councils, a hand in designing their own political development, the implementation of which has given rise to the current climate of peace, stability and economic prosperity through successive political reforms.

The latest of these reforms is making Equatorial Guinea a modern democratic State in which popular participation and representational politics are ensured at the highest possible level. The transfer of power is guaranteed by equal rights for all political options. Public affairs are administered with the utmost transparency, accountability and responsibility, and human rights are protected and monitored by reliable institutions.

In this spirit of ensuring the participation of all citizens of Equatorial Guineans in the management and administration of public affairs, our Government has extended an invitation to all political parties — those within the country and those in the diaspora alike — to

attend a national dialogue that will be held in November as an opportunity to strengthen democracy in our country as a positive experience in our democratic experiment, which has yielded fruit since its inception in 1982.

Concurrently with this political process, and thanks to the peace and political stability that we have achieved, our Government has undertaken economic initiatives to develop our natural resources and position Equatorial Guinea as an economically emerging country by 2020. On behalf of the people of Equatorial Guinea, I wish to thank those countries that have been cooperating with my Government in developing our economic and trade relations, in particular the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Cuba, France, Brazil, Russia and Morocco.

In conclusion, and with the fervent wish to see the United Nations recover its leading role in delivering peace, security and global development, I wish the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly every success.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Rajapaksa: I congratulate you, Sir, on being elected as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. We wish you success and assure you of our fullest cooperation.

The theme for this session "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda", is timely. The world has undergone many changes since the United Nations was created, and since the year 2000 much progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However, there are multiple challenges that still remain to be addressed. The moral and practical importance of creating an equitable world and a sustainable planet for this purpose cannot be ignored.

The Commonwealth, of which Sri Lanka is the current Chair-in-Office, accounts for more than one-quarter of the United Nations membership. In November 2013 the Commonwealth Heads of Government agreed in Colombo to contribute to the process of evolving the new post-2015 global development agenda. They have endorsed the central focus on the eradication of extreme poverty and reaffirmed commitments to sustainable development. The perspective on the post-2015 development agenda is based on shared values and principles contained in the Commonwealth Charter and individual experiences. The Commonwealth leaders encourage others to approach the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations in a collaborative spirit to achieve a balanced post-2015 development agenda.

Reducing inequality within and among countries is one of the most transformative goals that have been proposed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. We hope that this goal will serve to enhance the voice and representation of developing countries in decision-making. The post-2015 agenda must focus on implementation. Achieving the sustainable development goals would be impossible without the political will and dedication of all countries. It must be ensured that the failure of the developed countries to fulfil Millennium Goal 8 that called for a global partnership for development is not repeated.

In determining goals, countries must not be deprived of policy space to set their own domestic priorities. Instead of asking countries to reprioritize domestic spending, the focus should be on a strengthened partnership between developed and developing countries, backed by sincere commitment. That is essential for countries in the South to access financial resources and technology that are essential for capacity building. It is vital that we also address structural obstacles and political barriers that prevented the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, such as unfair trade and investment rules. Creating

a supportive international economic environment, enhanced investment flows, including from multilateral development banks, and an open multilateral trading regime, are important.

The role of the United Nations in advancing international peace, security and prosperity is crucial in the contemporary world. However, in order to gain the confidence and good will of the international community as a whole, one of the essential requirements is consistency of standards across the board without any perception of selectivity or discrimination. It is in this context that the current functioning of the system needs examination in order to enhance its credibility. Human rights are used as a tool to implement motivated agendas with no understanding or appreciation of the complexity of issues in the countries concerned. Human rights should be recognized by all as a moral and ethical concept rather than as a political tool. External intervention without adequate consideration of the structures in a society and cultural traditions of countries where such intervention takes place, inevitably results in destabilization, which is very much in evidence today in most parts of the world.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Post-conflict Sri Lanka has also become an unfortunate victim of ill-conceived agendas of some in the Human Rights Council who pay scant regard to the substantial progress achieved by Sri Lanka in reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation within a short span of five years. There is an obvious lack of balance and proportion in the manner in which my country is being targeted today, disregarding these significant achievements. That is in sharp contrast to the approach to deeply disturbing situations involving humanitarian emergencies elsewhere.

If multilateralism is to remain relevant and effective, reform of the institutions concerned is essential. To be successful this process must involve de-politicization of the United Nations systems and mechanisms and they must stop being a hostage to different forms of funding. United Nations bodies must find ways to work with governments through dialogue, greater understanding of situations, and cooperation, including assistance to strengthen national institutions. This approach, instead of strong-arm tactics, must form the heart of multilateral diplomacy in the search for sustainable solutions to global challenges.

The seventieth year of the United Nations in 2015 also marks the tenth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit where global leaders agreed to support early reform of the Security Council. Concrete results in this regard should be achieved next year at least.

Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our times. A robust global response needs to be arrived at in 2015 on the basis of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The increase in violence in the Middle East is deeply distressing. I reiterate Sri Lanka's support for the early realization of a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, existing within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel. We look forward to welcoming Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations at the earliest. The international community must assist Palestine to rebuild the country.

Sri Lanka firmly believes in the need for solidarity between Asia and Africa. Admiring the efforts of the people of Africa to achieve socioeconomic development, Sri Lanka has begun a process of reaching out to countries in Africa for an exchange of knowledge and expertise in areas of importance. The international community must strongly support the early eradication of deadly diseases in Africa.

Sri Lanka remains committed to supporting all multilateral efforts to counter terrorism deriving from extreme ideologies impacting on people across national frontiers. Terrorism continues to be a grave threat to the security and stability of nations throughout the globe. Having suffered at the hands of terrorism, Sri Lanka knows well its drastic impact on societies, communities and institutions founded on democratic traditions and ideals. The international community must strengthen multilateral action on terrorism, including the early finalization and adoption of the United Nations Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Sri Lanka is also committed to supporting all multilateral efforts to counter terrorism financing, piracy and all forms of international organized crime. We wish to recall our appeal to the international community not to support terrorist groups in any way, either directly or indirectly. Sri Lanka expresses its concern regarding bombings that kill innocent civilians and even unborn children in many situations across the world.

Sri Lanka expresses deep concern regarding unilateral economic measures against developing countries and is a consistent supporter of the call of the General Assembly for an end to the unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Unilateral sanctions of this nature, which impact on a country's innocent population, are unethical.

Despite being affected by terrorism, Sri Lanka has achieved most Millennium Development Goals. Sri Lanka has succeeded in being ranked ahead of all South Asian countries in the 2013 Human Development Index. Through the adoption of the National Development Strategy — the Mahinda Chinthana, or Vision for the Future — the Government of Sri Lanka embarked on an inclusive and rural-centric development programme. That involved bold policy decisions connected with macroeconomic management, revitalization of agriculture, infrastructure development, including roads and expressways, ports and airports, irrigation and water distribution, a strong telecommunication network and well-distributed urban and township development resulting in 7.8 per cent gross domestic product growth this year and per capita income of $3,280 in 2013. It is also a matter of deep satisfaction to recognize that the economic and political empowerment of the people of the North, supported by massive investment in infrastructure and livelihoods, have also contributed to this growth.

Sri Lanka's information technology literacy grew steadily from a mere 3 per cent in 2005 to almost 50 per cent in 2014. Sri Lanka's Nenasala Programme was awarded the prestigious Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Award as the best rural information technologyaccess programme in the world.

With the end of terrorism in May 2009, in keeping with my responsibilities to my people, large-scale post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and resettlement initiatives were implemented in the north in a relatively short period of four years. Most importantly, democratic structures in the North have been re-established. Elections to the Northern Provincial Council were held in September 2013 after a lapse of 28 years, upholding the democratic tradition in Sri Lanka which has been consistently protected since 1931, the year we attained universal franchise.

I recall in this context the visit to Sri Lanka of the Secretary-General just a week after the conclusion of the conflict, when a new era of peace had dawned. That was a manifestation of the close cooperation between my country and the United Nations and our commitment to working together in the future.

We continue on a deeply satisfying and transformative journey in the interests of all the people of Sri Lanka. In carrying out this task we work in accordance with our traditional foreign policy of friendship towards all and enmity towards none. We hope that the international community will reciprocate and assist Sri Lanka in its domestic process of reconciliation and economic development without exerting undue pressure on us.

We have gained inspiration from the words of Gautama the Buddha who said that the purpose of all human endeavour must be to construct order out of chaos and harmony out of strife. True to these words of wisdom, the Government of Sri Lanka remains committed to its objective of pursuing the processes of reconciliation and nation building, undeterred by ill-motivated criticism.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Maduro Moros (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, as this is the first time that I am attending in my capacity as the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I wish to thank the General Assembly, all its representative Governments and the various bodies of the United Nations system for the heartfelt tribute that was paid simultaneously at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in Geneva and other

places in the world to an extraordinary human being, Commander Hugo Chávez, who always carried the banners of peace, equality and respect for our peoples. That is the first thing I wish to convey from my heart on behalf of the people of Venezuela and to recall and invoke his spirit of tackling imperialism and injustice.

We have had debates for several decades now on the need to reform the Organization, and various Presidents that have presided over the Assembly. This morning, I strongly reminded Presidents Dilma Rousseff, Cristina Fernández, Evo Morales Ayma and other Presidents of the Americas of the need to reorient, readjust and tweak the entire United Nations system. This system has been in place for 70 years since the end of the so-called Second World War, which took place in Europe and other parts of the world between 1939 and 1945.

The United Nations Charter is one of the most beautiful poems that we could ever read. It has well and truly become an instrument that has been set aside, overlooked and consistently flouted in terms of its fundamental objectives are concerned. The United Nations is an historic human experiment that has become a landmark because never before has humankind had a forum to meet to address issues of peace, affecting life and death, and to negotiate solutions to conflicts. After 7,000 years of civilization as we know it — a review of which reveals a history of empires and the ongoing battle to distribute the wealth and territory of the world — only with the establishment of this system in 1945 did we begin to get a glimpse of future light at the end of a long tunnel of battles, wars and global conflicts.

We call for the renewed relevance of the United Nations, above and beyond any criticism that may be levelled against it. Given the human importance of this institution, we insist on the need for an in-depth transformation, as Commander Hugo Chávez said on many occasions right here in this Hall. In his famous statements in defence of the causes of humankind, he stressed the need for a far-reaching democratic overhaul of the United Nations system. As President Jacob Zuma of our sister country South Africa said, we must democratize and overhaul the Security Council.

The role of the regions today is different from what it was in 1945. This is another world. The United Nations was born to deal with post-war reconstruction and the issues that had given rise to conflicts. The United Nations has to deal today with a multicentric, multipolar world of numerous actors, with emerging countries and regions that have their own thoughts, aspirations and desire to be respected in this world. The United Nations has to adapt and submit to the broader sovereignty of the peoples of this world, who are crying out for their voices to be heard, heeded and respected.

We have heard speeches today at the start of this sixty-ninth session. We also believe in strengthening the role of the Secretary-General. As we have said so many times we must have a Secretary-General who represents all of us and who has the political and institutional clout to find solutions to the world's conflicts. We must reconfigure the system and functions of the General Assembly. We must democratize it and give it a leading role to ensure that the great debates that take place here can always successfully address the major issues facing the world. That is why we believe that we must build a new United Nations in a bid for a new multipolar world of peace where there no empire can impose its will on a unipolar world. This is urgent for the entire world.

Above and beyond what officials of the various Governments represented in this Hall may believe, we already have another world where we all wish to speak, think and decide our own fate and to achieve peace for our peoples. A new regionalism has come to the fore. In the late 1940s and the 1950s, we saw the birth of the European Union as an experiment in the new regionalism that is admired and emulated by many throughout the world. In the 1970s and 1980s, we saw the emergence of the Organization of African Unity, an extraordinary system to organize the brotherly African continent to address the issues of development and life. Our mother Africa was one of the most suffering regions the world.

Now as we embark on the twenty-first century, Latin America is taking its place. We have seen new organizations arise in Latin America. On 14 December, we will commemorate in Havana, Cuba, a heroic island and great homeland, the tenth anniversary of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas. We have assumed an important role in building a new social and economic order in defence of such major causes as climate change. In existence for 10 years now, that youthful organization, partnership or alliance is now looking forward to the rest of the twenty-first century.

I would also mention Petrocaribe and its 18 brotherly member States. I hope I may be forgiven if I seem immodest, but PetroCaribe is a model that best shows how we can have a new world of peace, justice, solidarity, cooperation and complementarity among

nations. To the powerful of the world, those who wield all the capital and all the economic power, I say that we can have another world. We are starting to build it in the Americas.

Also emerging is the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), representing a new southern regionalism that was founded on 16 April 2007 with the participation of new leaders in Latin America and our Commander Hugo Chávez. It is a most interesting and important bloc that is now starting to forge ties with the rest of the emerging world.

We recently held a very interesting and important meeting for the remainder of the decade between the BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, who represent the hope for development through new mechanisms — and UNASUR in Brasilia, and we decided to share our experiences. The BRICS Bank and the Banco del Sur would be a new financial architecture for the world that must emerge from this new regionalism. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was established on 3 December 2011 in Caracas, and is already growing strong. We have held summits in Santiago de Chile and Havana and will hold another in San José in January. All of Latin America is coming together optimistically in this new regionalism.

Based on this experience, we are seeing new structures arise towards the establishment of a road map for overhauling the United Nations system. Let the call for reform of the Organization not fall through the cracks here in this Hall. We must find the way. We must try to come up with a common road map for humankding because we need it if we are to tackle the major issues before us.

For 22 years, the United Nations has customarily voted with record insistence for a cause that is not just a cause of the Americas but one espoused by the peoples and Governments of this world. I speak of the rejection of the economic embargo against our brother Republic of Cuba — an anachronistic vestige of the Cold War. The President of Estonia spoke earlier about the anachronisms of the Cold War and the systems of economic persecution used to impose political regimes and subjugate peoples. We are here on behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to confirm our support for the 50-year struggle of the people and Government of Cuba against the criminal blockade. I ask President Obama: When will you seize the opportunity to go down in history by putting an end once and for all to the criminal economic and trade embargo and persecution of our brother country of Cuba?

We also see new causes arise in the current struggles facing our region. We have taken them on in unison. I wish here to recognize as a great step forward the decision taken by the General Assembly two weeks ago in support of the Argentine Republic and President Cristina Fernández in her struggle against the financial plundering of the vulture funds. We want to support her in every way we can to ensure that the General Assembly, in accordance with the proposal of the Group of 77 and China and in as timely and efficient a manner as possible, drafts a high-quality document mandating the defence of the nations represented by the Organization, especially the poor countries of the developing world, against vulture funds that seek to plunder our economies and impose detrimental economic, institutional and political systems. We confirm the full solidarity of the people of Venezuela with the people of Argentina, and indeed the solidarity of the CELAC countries. Let us move towards this historic decision. We received 124 votes in favour last week.

As we did at the CELAC summit in Havana, Venezuela also calls on the United Nations to support as closely and warmly as it can and enforce the decisions calling on the United States of America to enforce and execute a decolonization plan for Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico was invited to join CELAC because it is Caribbean and it is ours. We raise our voice to make it heard in this Hall to call for the release of a man whose name many here will hear for the first time. President Jacob Zuma of South Africa spoke of the great Madiba, Nelson Mandela, who was forgotten for many years, despite the fact that many now claim him as a representative of their causes. That is fine. Nelson Mandela represents the human capacity of resilience and resistance enjoyed by people as they seek to achieve the objectives of justice and peace.

That is why I raise the name of a man who almost 35 years ago was imprisoned and has been subjected to torture — a man with a family, a man from Latin America and the Caribbean, a man like us. We are talking about the Puerto Rican Oscar López Rivera, the longest-held political prisoner who remains in a United States prison to this day. We demand his immediate release. His only sin was to fight for independence and to defend the beautiful flag and star of the dignity of our sister country of Puerto Rico. These are the causes of this historic moment.

Venezuela is in the midst of a people's democratic revolution that began with an unimpeachable constitutional event. For the first time in the history of our country, the Constitution of the Republic was debated by the people and approved by a referendum with the participation of the sovereign vote of the people of Venezuela in 1999. Since then, we have been developing and carrying out a process of political and social liberation.

We are trying to overcome poverty. In 2015, we will have the post-2015 development agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be over. Through great effort, the Bolivarian Venezuela led by our Commander Hugo Chávez, was fortunately able achieve practically all the MDGs. We have an enrolment rate of more than 90 per cent in almost all schools, and we offer free, quality education from basic schools through to universities. We have lowered the unemployment rate from 20 per cent five years ago to 5.5 per cent at the end of last year. We have changed the curves. We had vulnerable employment to the tune of 60 per cent; now, 60 per cent of those jobs are protected by social security, and are remunerated at a fair, regulated rate.

I could spend hours here talking of the progress we have made towards the MDGs. We have been able to salvage our oil wealth. I am sure Members will know that we have the largest oil reserves on the planet in the beautiful Orinoco basin, and we have the largest oil fields there. For the first time in 90 years, we recovered full control over our own petroleum resources as the anchor for our economic and social development. Venezuela has had to suffer ongoing harassment and persecution at the hands of the imperial forces and the allies of the United States empire, who have sought again and again to undermine our democracy. One such attempt was the attempted coup against Hugo Chávez. Following his death on 5 March 2013, those forces resumed their activities to undermine our country. I thank the Governments of the world for their solidarity with Venezuela, which has been struggling and resisting. They could not prevail against Hugo Chávez and they cannot prevail against us. We are still on the path towards revolution, democracy, independence and dignity, with our own voice speaking to the world.

There are major problems that we now have to address at this point. As members well know, one such problem — perhaps the greatest threat of all — is the virus that causes Ebola haemorrhagic fever. If this world and our United Nations system had been somewhat more humane, we would have focused on lending our support to tackling this real threat instead of sending drones, missiles and bombs to destroy the people of Gaza or to bomb the people of Iraq and Syria. The President of Chad announced that his country had decided to donate $2 million to the Ebola fund. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is going to be giving $5 million to the fund to support Africa and the needy people of the world.

Let us be clear. We should be discussing the scientific reports here and taking decisions based on those reports. We should be focused on another important issue affecting the survival of humankind on this Earth — climate change. A poem of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, which was read out yesterday, says that after they can no longer poison the rivers, after they have poisoned our lakes, once there is not even one fish left to eat, then the powerful of the world will have to eat each other. They want to create extraneous formulas when all they need to do is to make an extraordinary effort and recognize climate change as a climatic emergency. We should not just make speeches and vague offers; we must restore sanity to the Organization if we are to strengthen it, and place at the forefront of our agenda the real common problems facing us.

Today in the Security Council, they adopted a series of decisions in a bid to combat terrorism. Let us be clear: we must combat terrorism. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America has been condemning terrorism for more than a year and a half. We are deeply pained by the murder of Western journalists and the dastardly acts of these terrorists, but a year and a half ago when boys and girls were captured by these terrorist and other groups in Syria, we were not that pained at that time. They were beheading women in mosques. The pain should be the same.

Should our pain be greater depending on the colour or origin of the skin of a person or the origin of that person? The loss of human lives should pain us all, and we therefore condemn the terrorist attack perpetrated by NATO and its allies to change the regime in Syria. I am here to say, with force of truth, on behalf of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and my Government, that if the Government of Syria had been overthrown by those imperial attacks, today in that entire region of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan we would see the power of those terrorists take root.

As painful as it may be, we have to say that President Bashar Al-Assad and the democratic and constitutional Government of Syria has always combated terrorism and has suffered thousands of deaths. We believe that instead of the continual, demented bombing, must strike a great alliance of peace against terrorism, respecting the sovereignty of countries and sovereign Governments throughout that region. I would ask the delegation of the United States take note of this message and convey it to President Obama.

Only an alliance that respects the sovereignty of those nations, along with the cooperation of their Governments, peoples and armed forces, will overthrow the Islamic State and the terrorist forces advancing like monster against the West. There is no other way to overthrow them — certainly not with bombs that kill mostly the innocent. They never kill the armed forces; they always kill the innocent. After so much death and bombing of the brotherly Arab people of Iraq, we have to invite the sovereign Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt and indeed the entire region to come up with a comprehensive political, military, cultural and communication strategy that can be supported by the Security Council. Anything else is crazy.

Let us consider what happened in Libya, as noted by the President of Chad. It only fomented hatred and an anti-Al-Qadhafi front. What is happening in Libya? It has become a territory for trafficking in arms and explosives by terrorist groups fighting for scraps of territory. We have seen the end of the beautiful history of the people of our brother country of Libya. It is a crazy race towards more violence and terrorism. A more dangerous world has emerged from the demented work of those who lead and make decisions in the Organization.

We humbly lend our voice and our proposal to the table, and we do so with genuine love. That is how we show our solidarity with the people of Palestine. We in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America will continue to show our solidarity with them. Venezuela, as Members know, has opened a modest air-bridge to provide logistical support, food, blankets and medicines in support of the people of Palestine who recently suffered a brutal attack. We want peace, total peace. Our Organization needs to be overhauled so that everyone can enjoy total peace. It is not through the threat of the use of force, or the use of force, or internal competition to overthrow Governments such as the one that I lead, that we will have stable peace. No, it is respect for international law that will lead to stable peace and full security.

Lastly, I wish to thank the General Assembly for its support. Next year, 2015, Venezuela, with members' support, will assume leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement for the next three years. We humbly aspire to play a genuine role in mobilizing and revitalizing the entire process of United Nations reform. The process must include the elaboration of an agenda of world priorities in which we will all have a voice and a vote, and no one can impose their will on the others. Next year, delegations from throughout the world will be welcome at the historic Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Caracas.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by The Right Honourable David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Right Honourable David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency, David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Cameron (United Kingdom): This year we face extraordinary tests of our values and our resolve. In responding to the aggression against one of our Member States, Ukraine; in seeking peace in the Middle East; in dealing with the terrifying spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa; and in overcoming what I want to focus on today, which is the mortal threat we all face

from the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria and Iraq. Deir ez-Zor is a province in eastern Syria. Home to the Al-Sheitaat tribe it was captured by ISIL last month. Seven hundred tribesmen were executed; many were beheaded. The vast majority were civilians, Muslims who refused to take an oath of allegiance to ISIL's sick extremist world view and who paid for this with their lives. They are not alone. Across Syria and northern Iraq thousands have suffered the same fate — Muslims, both Sunni and Shia; Christians; Yazidis; people of every faith and none.

ISIL is not a problem restricted to just one region. It has murderous plans to expand its borders well beyond Iraq and Syria and to carry out terrorist atrocities right across the world. It is recruiting new fighters from all over the world. Five hundred have gone there from my country, Britain, and one of them almost certainly brutally murdered two American journalists and a British aid worker. This is a problem that affects us all and we must tackle it together.

There is not one person in this Hall who will view this challenge without reference to the past, whether in Iraq or in Afghanistan. Of course it is absolutely right that we should learn the lessons of the past, especially what happened in Iraq a decade ago. But we have to learn the right lessons — yes to careful preparation; no to rushing to join a conflict without a clear plan. But we must not be so frozen with fear that we do not do anything at all. Isolation and withdrawing from a problem like ISIL will only make matters worse.

We must not allow past mistakes to become an excuse for indifference or inaction. The right lesson is that we should act, but act differently. We should be comprehensive, defeating the ideology of extremism that is the root cause of this terrorism, so that we win the battle of ideas and not just the battle of military might. We should be intelligent, supporting representative and accountable Governments and working with them at their request, not going in over their heads. We should be inclusive, working with partners in the region who are prepared to be part of the solution, potentially including Iran. We should be uncompromising, using all the means at our disposal, including military force, to hunt down these extremists. Let me take each of these in turn.

The root cause of this terrorist threat is a poisonous ideology of Islamist extremism. This has nothing to do with Islam, which is a peaceful religion that inspires countless acts of generosity every day. Islamist extremism on the other hand believes in using the most brutal forms of terrorism to force people to accept a warped world view and to live in a quasi-mediaeval state. To defeat ISIL, and organizations like it, we must defeat this ideology in all its forms.

As evidence emerges about the backgrounds of those convicted of terrorist offences, it is clear that many of them were initially influenced by preachers who claim not to encourage violence but whose world view can be used as a justification for it. We know this world view. The peddling of lies — that 9/11 was somehow a Jewish plot, or that the 7/7 London attacks were staged; the idea that Muslims are persecuted all over the world as a deliberate act of Western policy; and the concept of an inevitable clash of civilizations.

We must be clear. To defeat the ideology of extremism we need to deal with all forms of extremism, not just violent extremism. For governments there are some obvious ways we can do this. We must ban preachers of hate from coming to our countries. We must proscribe organizations that incite terrorism against people at home and abroad. We must work together to take down illegal online material like the recent videos of ISIL murdering hostages. We must stop the so-called non-violent extremists from inciting hatred and intolerance in our schools, universities and even our prisons. Of course, some will argue that this is not compatible with free speech and intellectual inquiry. But I ask "Would we sit back and allow right-wing extremists, Nazis or Ku Klux Klansmen to recruit on our university campuses?" No, so we should not stand by and just allow any form of non-violent extremism.

We need to argue that prophecies of a global war of religion pitting Muslims against the rest of the world are nonsense. We need Muslims and their Governments throughout the world to reclaim their religion from these sick terrorists as so many are doing, and quite rightly doing, today. We all need to help them with programmes that channel young people away from these poisonous ideologues, and we need the strongest possible international focus on tackling this ideology, which is why here at the United Nations the United Kingdom is calling for a new Special Representative on extremism.

But fighting extremism will never be enough. Communism was defeated not simply by pointing out its flaws, but by showing that the alternative of economic freedoms, democracy and the rule of law could build a better society and a better world. Young people need

to see the power of a different, better, more open, more democratic path. The twentieth century taught us the vital role of representative and accountable Governments in offering their people opportunity, hope and dignity.

Of course we should not be naïve. Not every country can move at the same speed or even reach the same destination. We should respect different cultures, traditions and histories. But let us be clear — the failure to meet people's aspirations can create a breeding ground where extremist and even terrorist insurgency can take root. Governments that only govern for some of their people cause deep resentment. In Iraq, the failure of the Al-Maliki Government to represent all of the people has driven some of them into the arms of the extremists.

Too often, people have been faced with a false choice between an autocratic and unrepresentative government on the one hand and a brutal insurgency, with religion misused as its rallying call, on the other. To combat this we must support the building blocks of free and open societies. In Iraq this means supporting the creation of a new and genuinely inclusive Government capable of uniting all Iraqis — Sunnis, Shia, Kurd, Christians and others. In Syria, it must mean a political transition and an end to Al-Assad's brutality.

I know there are some who think that we should do a deal with Al-Assad in order to defeat ISIL. But I think this view is dangerously misguided. Our enemies' enemy is not our friend; it is another enemy. Doing a deal with Al-Assad will not defeat ISIL because the bias and the brutality of the Al-Assad regime were and are one of the most powerful recruiting tools for the extremists. Syria needs what Iraq needs — an inclusive, representative, democratic Government that can look after the interests of all its peoples.

To those who have backed Al-Assad or who have stood on the sidelines, I would say this: "We are ready to join with you in a new political effort to secure a representative and accountable Government in Damascus that can take the fight to ISIL". It is simply not credible for Al-Assad to lead such a government although we are prepared to look at every practical option to find a way forward.

We must be inclusive, engaging the widest possible coalition of countries in this international effort. ISIL is a threat to us all, but the greatest threat is to the region. It is very welcome that a number of Arab countries have already taken part in the action to degrade ISIL. They have shown courage and leadership. Iran should also be given the chance to show it can be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Earlier today I met with President Rouhani. We have severe disagreements. Iran's support for terrorist organizations, its nuclear programme, and its treatment of its people all need to change. But Iran's leaders could help in defeating the threat from ISIL. They could help to secure a more stable, inclusive Iraq, and a more stable and inclusive Syria. If they are prepared to do this, we should welcome their engagement.

Finally, when the safety and security of our people are at stake, we must be uncompromising in our response. That starts at home. For our part, in the United Kingdom we are introducing new powers to strengthen our ability to seize passports and stop suspects from travelling; to allow us to strip British identity from dual nationals and temporarily prevent some British nationals getting back into our country; to ensure that airlines comply with our no fly lists and security screening requirements; and to enable our police and security services to apply for stronger locational constraints on those in the United Kingdom who pose a risk. Here at the United Nations we have led in the adoption of a Security Council resolution to disrupt the flows of finance to ISIL, to sanction those who are seeking to recruit to ISIL and to encourage countries to do all they can to prevent foreign fighters joining the extremist cause.

What about the role of our military? I do not believe that the treat of Islamist extremism will best be solved by Western ground troops directly trying to pacify or reconstruct Middle Eastern or African countries. But, pursuing an intelligent and comprehensive approach should include a place for our military. Our military can support the enormous humanitarian efforts that are necessary, as our Royal Air Force did in helping the millions of people who fled from ISIL. We should, together, do more to build the capability of the legitimate authorities that are fighting the extremists. That can mean training, equipping and advising, and providing technology and the other assets necessary for success. Whether it is supporting action against Boko Haram in Nigeria, against Al-Shabaab in Somalia, against Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, or against Al-Qaida in Yemen, it is right to help those who are fighting on the front line for their societies, their countries and their freedom.

Along with our European partners, we have already been supplying equipment directly to Kurdish forces. We are strengthening the resilience of the military forces in neighbouring Lebanon and Jordan, and British Tornado and surveillance aircraft have already been helping with intelligence gathering and logistics support to help those taking on ISIL in Iraq.

We now have a substantial international coalition in place, including Arab nations, committed to confronting and defeating ISIL. We have a comprehensive strategy to do that, with the political, diplomatic, humanitarian and military components that are needed to succeed over time. The Security Council has now received a clear request from the Iraqi Government to support it in its military action against ISIL. So we have a clear basis in international law for action, and we have a need to act in our own national interest to protect our people and our society. It is right that Britain should now move to a new phase of action. I am therefore recalling the British Parliament on Friday to secure approval for the United Kingdom to take part in international air strikes against ISIL in Iraq.

My message today is simple. We are facing an evil against which the whole world should unite. As ever, in the cause of freedom, democracy and justice, Britain will play its part.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Prime Minister of Denmark

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Denmark.

Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Prime Minister of Denmark, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Prime Minister of Denmark, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Ms. Thorning-Schmidt (Denmark): Despite our aspirations to create a more just and peaceful world, atrocities continue to take place. Every day we witness expressions of the darker side of human nature: thousands of innocent civilians besieged on a mountain in northern Iraq by heavily armed extremists; a Syrian dictator who bombs and starves his own people, leaving more than 10 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance; the persecution of people because of their religious or political beliefs, their gender or sexual orientation; disrespect for national borders, challenging the basic principles on which our rules-based international order is built; climate change causing great risks to human health, global food security and economic development and to the natural resources on which so much of our prosperity depends; and a world of more than 7 billion people with an increasing demand for key resources and an unsustainable pattern of consumption and production.

The challenges we face are complex. There are no simple solutions. What is required of us is strong, collective international action, not only to manage the crises and conflicts of today but to prevent the crises and conflicts of tomorrow. I am a true believer in international cooperation and in the virtues of the United Nations, but as the world changes and we are faced with new challenges, we must find new ways to adapt.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I am also confident that we will adapt, but only if we have a strong United Nations, and only if we act together. As Member States each one of us must fulfil our obligations under the Charter. That is our common commitment and our shared responsibility. I see three challenges where we, the United Nations, should act and should act now. Urgency is key.

First, we need stronger international cooperation and action on peace and security. Secondly, we have to reach an ambitious international agreement on climate change next year in Paris. Thirdly, we have to agree on the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development.

Of the three challenges, the first is international peace and security. This past year, we have seen the rise of a violent and intensifying conflict fuelled by extremism, in particular the horrific and brutal terrorist organization, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). ISIL represents a distorted political ideology that must be confronted, degraded and defeated by the entire international community, including, of course, countries in the region. As we are gathered this week,

the States Members of the United Nations are sending a clear message that we utterly condemn ISIL's cowardly acts of terror and that we are unified in our firm resolve to oppose and confront its violent and extremist ideology. Let it be clear that we are determined to support the Iraqi Government in protecting its people.

Denmark will stand up for our common values as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and Denmark will support the victims of ISIL'S atrocities. We are taking part in the humanitarian relief efforts in northern Iraq, and we will continue our active contribution to the international efforts to support Iraq in the fight against ISIL. To stop the advance of ISIL, it is imperative to end the flow of foreign fighters and financing from outside. That indeed is a common obligation. It is also critical that we address the root causes of violent extremism and improve the conditions in Syria that ISIL has been able to exploit.

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to be of great concern. Though progress is difficult, we must spare no effort to seek a political solution leading to a transition from the current regime. There will always be a risk that political transition will be exploited by violent extremists. Still, history shows that democratic and inclusive Governments, open societies and a fundamental respect for human rights remain the only viable path towards stability, security and prosperity for our citizens.

Bringing an end to the violence in the region will require a sustained and comprehensive contribution from every one of us. The successful removal of Al-Assad's chemical weapons clearly demonstrated what can be achieved when we join forces in decisive international action. A coalition of Denmark, Norway, Russia, China, Finland, the United Kingdom and the United States effectively secured and destroyed those horrendous weapons of war.

Our united response is also required against another growing threat. The Ebola epidemic has become a severe humanitarian, social and economic crisis for countries in West Africa. If we fail to act now, it may develop into a global health crisis, impacting millions of people. If so, we will not only be confronted with a health crisis but also with a threat to international peace, prosperity and security. It is very clear that this challenge cannot be tackled by any one nation alone. That is why we must all lend our support. The United Nations and its Member States have a common responsibility to bring Ebola under control.

Ebola is not just a regional challenge; it has now become a global crisis. Denmark is committed to that cause. We have already contributed to the international response, including the United Nations humanitarian air service, and we will now increase our support. Today, I can announce that Denmark will provide a maritime transport capacity to the United Nations. With that, we will support the construction of needed housing facilities for the international health personnel in the affected areas. We will provide additional funding to the World Health Organization. As the situation evolves, we will stand ready to consider additional steps.

The global community is based on international law. That law must be respected and not blatantly violated, as we have seen done in the past year. We have witnessed an unacceptable foreign intervention in Ukraine. Fundamental principles of national sovereignty and non-interference have been disrespected. The recent ceasefire is an important step on the only viable way forward, namely, a political solution. Yet, we have to see Russia's commitment to a political solution demonstrated in action, not only in words. Throughout the conflict Russia's self-proclaimed support to the peace process has been in stark contrast to realities on the ground.

We remain fully committed to a political solution that respects Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Respect for international law and human rights should always be at the very core of peace and development, as should the rule of law and good governance. That is why Denmark strongly supports bold and significant new steps in the United Nations, such as the Secretary-General's recent Rights Up Front initiative.

This year also marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Together with Chile, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco, Denmark has launched a long-term initiative for the universal ratification and implementation of that Convention. We have made significant progress, but we also need to do more to protect men and women in all parts of the world from torture and ill-treatment.

My second point is about the need to advance our collective answer to the challenges posed by climate change. Earlier this year I had the privilege, together with the Premier of Greenland, of hosting a visit by the Secretary-General to Greenland. We travelled

together by dog sleigh on the receding ice, and we heard the stories told by the local population about how the changes are affecting local livelihoods. Climate change is painfully visible in the Arctic. That is beyond discussion. Let there be no illusion that climate change will have only regional impacts. The changes will affect each and every one of us on this planet. That is why ambitious action is required of us now. One crucial step would be a binding global agreement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in Paris next year.

Since 2010, Denmark has dedicated $350 million to climate action. This year alone, we will commit more than $100 million. But Governments cannot do this alone. We need to engage the private sector and other partners to commit to action and ensure adequate climate finance and foster innovation and green solutions. Some still might fear that the green transition will limit economic growth. That is not necessarily so. For example, the Danish economy has grown by 40 per cent since 1990, while our total emissions have decreased by 20 per cent in that same period. In other words, it is possible to de-link economic growth from increased emissions. At the Secretary-General's Climate Summit yesterday, world leaders expressed their commitment to address those issues. Now is the time to deliver on that commitment.

The third and final area where Denmark sees an urgent need for action is on the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development. As stated by the Secretary-General: "Ours is the first generation that can wipe poverty from the face of the Earth" (*A/68/PV.5, p. 1*). That is not a message based on wishful thinking. It is based on the facts. It is within our reach and it has to be done. Over a 20-year period, from 1990-2010, 700 million people have been lifted out of extreme poverty. Child mortality has been reduced by almost 50 per cent. Ninety per cent of children in developing regions now attend primary schools. That represents truly historic progress. But still we need to do more.

The Millennium Development Goals were formulated almost 15 years ago, and the world has, as we know, developed rapidly since. Clearly, the new set of sustainable development goals must address and integrate the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development.

Another important factor is to ensure women's empowerment, gender equality and the rights of women and girls. That includes sexual and reproductive health rights. In too many places those fundamental rights are still not observed. Women and young girls must have the right to decide freely whether they want to have children, when, how many, and with whom.

All young people must have access to proper education. Two hundred years ago, compulsory education was introduced in my country. Education for the many and not just for the few has been a primary driver in transforming Denmark into a democratic and prosperous nation. Education has also been a driver of gender equality, and still is. That is one aspect of the post-2015 agenda that is particularly close to my heart. I have been very proud to be one of the Secretary-General's Champions for his Global Education First Initiative. One of our key priorities must be to ensure quality education also for the most disadvantaged groups and in the most vulnerable countries.

As we look at the global landscape today, insecurity is sadly on the rise. We all know who is paying the highest price. Today for the first time since the Second World War, more than 50 million people throughout the world have been displaced owing to conflict and violence. Far too many of those people are children.

We need a United Nations that can help mediate, prevent and resolve armed conflicts and promote universal respect for human rights. We need a United Nations that is committed to act against climate change. And we need a United Nations that can help deliver sustainable development for all and provide effective assistance to countries suffering from the Ebola virus.

But the United Nations can do nothing without the collective political will of all of us, its Member States. The world needs a United Nations that adapts to new challenges and reflects the changing global political realities. Denmark supports a reformed Security Council that fulfils its primary purpose and responsibility when peace and security is threatened. We need a United Nations based on the strong values and obligations enshrined in the United Nations Charter. More than ever, we need a United Nations that acts.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Denmark for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Prime Minister of Denmark, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Ukraine.

Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Yatsenyuk (Ukraine): Ukraine, as a co-founder of the United Nations, knows why we established this Organization — for peace and stability. Do we have this peace and stability? No, and yet our global aim and global target is to do everything we can to protect our citizens and to deliver peace to our nations. The global agenda today consists of a number of things. Everyone has mentioned the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, everyone has mentioned Ebola, and everyone has mentioned Ukraine. Frankly speaking I would be happy not to be in this situation, but we are a country that knows what terrorism means, and not in words but in deeds, in practice.

Let me remind Members of the origin of the conflict that is evolving in Ukraine. Is it a domestic conflict? No. It is true that my country has some internal differences, but every country has differences and we are ready to handle and tackle those differences inside our country. The origin of the conflict is an invasion by the Russian Federation. A permanent member of the Security Council has violated the United Nations Charter, which is absolutely and entirely unacceptable behaviour, especially on the part of a permanent member of the Council. It would be better for Russia to be an "insecurity" member rather than a security one.

Twenty years ago, Ukraine abandoned its nuclear weapons. We possessed the third-biggest arsenal in the world. When we agreed to relinquish our nuclear power arsenal in Budapest, Ukraine got guarantees of territorial integrity and sovereignty. Russia was a co-signer of and co-contributor to that memorandum. Instead of security guarantees, 20 years later we received Russian military boots on Ukrainian soil. It seems that it is difficult to convince another country to stop nuclear proliferation. We are committed to our nuclear non-proliferation programme, but we need to have valid guarantees of our territorial integrity, security and independence.

A few months ago, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea. One country, which is a Member State of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, a country that is armed to the teeth, just decided to grab the land of its neighbour, independent Ukraine. Let me commend the efforts of United Nations Member States that overwhelmingly supported the resolution supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity and condemning the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. They moved further. For today we can state that Russian troops are deployed in the east of Ukraine. The Russian Federation violated a number of bilateral and multilateral international agreements, starting with the United Nations Charter and ending with the resolutions on counter-terrorism that were adopted at the United Nations.

We know what terrorism means, and we urge Russia to pull back its forces, to pull back its artillery, to stop supplying Russian-led terrorists, to restore control over the Ukrainian-Russian border, and to start real talks, peace talks. We are the country that needs peace. It is difficult to hammer out any kind of peace deal at the barrel of a gun made in Russia.

Let me remind members of a tragedy that happened because of the Russian invasion. A few months ago, a civilian aircraft, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, was downed by a Russian-made surface-to-air missile, and 298 innocent civilians were killed. Ukraine mourns the victims. We pray together with the families from the Netherlands, Australia, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Germany. Ukraine handed over the investigation to an independent body which is Dutch-led. We urge everyone to help us to bring to justice those responsible for this despicable crime, a crime against humanity.

Every day, despite the ceasefire, we are losing Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, and the shelling is still going on. I reiterate once again that we need peace. What is the formula for this peace? The military option is definitely not the best option. It has to be a comprehensive approach which comprises diplomatic, financial, political and, only at the last, military options.

The United States and the European Union imposed a number of sanctions against Russia. We do understand that sanctions are the way to start real talks

and to hammer out a peace deal. We have no trust in words. We have trust only in deeds and actions. Once again we reiterate our commitment to restore law and order. We urge the Russian Federation to stick to its international obligation to execute everything that was written in Minsk. This is not a menu where one can pick the cherry. It means that Russia is to execute all 12 points of this memorandum. We ask our partners not to lift sanctions until Ukraine takes over control of its entire territory, starting with the east of Ukraine and ending with Crimea. Crimea was, is and will be a part of Ukraine.

Let me end with a direct message to the Russian President. Mr. Putin can win the fight against the troops, but he will never win the fight against a united Ukrainian nation.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Ukraine for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rashid Meredov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkmenistan.

Mr. Meredov (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First, I have the honour to convey words of greeting and wishes of peace and prosperity to the Member States and their people on behalf of the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow. I should like to congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and wish him success in his forthcoming responsibilities. I should also like to express my appreciation to Mr. John Ashe, President at the sixty-eighth session, for his skillful and effective work in this post.

The current session of the General Assembly is taking place against the background of difficult processes that we see in various regions of the world. Assessment of these processes and their causal relationships may differ, but it is apparent that in view of prevailing conditions the world community needs to apply balanced, sober and a highly responsible approach to emerging and potential challenges and threats.

The peaceful resolution of these conflicts must be achieved by diplomatic approaches. It is an objective and imperative requirement of our times. Experience once again vividly demonstrates that there is no military solution to the international and internal conflicts in today's world. It is our firm conviction that the role of the United Nations is acquiring decisive importance. The United Nations must play the leading role in reconciling contradictions, preserving global stability, and strengthening peoples' faith in international institutions and legal frameworks.

The Security Council is called on to assume a special responsibility. Its functions and authority under the United Nations Charter cannot be questioned or used to satisfy some individual or group interest. The Security Council is and must remain the only universal legitimate body for maintaining global peace and stability and safeguardingthe political and moral foundations of the modern global architecture.

Turkmenistan has unceasingly and consistently advocated the expansion and maximum use of the United Nations peacekeeping potential. Today, the need for this is especially relevant. Therefore, our country proposes to actively begin the development of common approaches with a view to reducing and, in future, completely eliminating all potential risks of confrontation.

As the Assembly will recall, the President of Turkmenistan stated at the sixty-sixth session that it was necessary to adopt a United Nations declaration on the priority use of political and diplomatic means to solve international problems and their further consideration at the General Assembly. We are ready to engage in meaningful and constructive discussions with all interested parties on this issue.

The logic of the development of global processes in the sphere of security dictates the need for fundamental strengthening of regional cooperation mechanisms. For Central Asia, such cooperation should ensure favourable conditions for preserving and maintaining lasting peace and stability and for successful responses to terrorist threats, extremism, organized crime and drug trafficking.

In this connection, we consider it relevant to create a standing mechanism of political consultations to coordinate steps aimed at maintaining security in this area, as well as preventing and neutralizing conflict situations and combating new threats. We propose that serious consideration be given to the idea of convening a forum on security and cooperation in Central Asia

under the auspices of the United Nations as a starting platform for further work in this area.

We stand ready to host such a forum in 2015 in Turkmenistan's capital, Ashgabat. As the host country of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, Turkmenistan advocates multilateral support for its work, which has proven to be highly effective. It is not by chance that in August 2012 the United Nations Security Council emphasized the great importance of preventive diplomacy and early settlement of disputes and in this connection supported the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. We are convinced that in the context of current and future developments of political, economic, environmental and humanitarian processes in the Central Asian region and neighbouring areas, the mandate of the Centre will be especially relevant and necessary. We therefore call for more active involvement of that Centre in various aspects of regional problems with the support of Member States.

Turkmenistan also believes that it is essential to establish a more focused and substantive interaction between the Regional Centre and international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and other bodies, with a view to elaborating common approaches to such current issues as transnational threats, terrorism, illegal drug trafficking, environmental challenges, management of transboundary water and energy resources, and regional security in the context of the situation in Afghanistan.

In speaking of this, I wish to underline that the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan is a key factor in achieving regional peace and stability. It is essential to support the positive processes that are taking place in this country and to provide the Afghan people with real assistance in achieving reconciliation and accord. That can be achieved only through peaceful negotiation. There are no other options here.

As a neutral country and Afghanistan's immediate neighbour, Turkmenistan offered its political space for the organization of a broad-based inter-Afghan national dialogue under the auspices and active involvement of the United Nations. We already have joint experience in conducting negotiations in such a format. We believe that it could be used today as well. Such dialogue, in addition to purely political aspects, implies the discussion of a full set of measures aimed at providing specific economic support to Afghanistan and the involvement of that country in regional integration processes and future infrastructure projects.

For many years Turkmenistan has provided assistance to its neighbour in building social facilities and initiated the implementation of major transport and energy projects with Afghanistan's participation. In particular, I note the project envisaging construction of the Turkmenistan/Pakistan/India gas pipeline, preparations for which are nearing the final stages. Another major project, which was launched in May last year, involves the construction of a Turkmenistan/Afghanistan/Tajikstan railway. We consider these projects to be key in rebuilding the economy and social spheres of Afghanistan, and enabling it to make thetransition to a peaceful and creative existence.

For a number of years our country has consistently supplied electric power to Afghanistan on highly favourable terms. In the near future, thanks to the commissioning of new power-generating capacities in Turkmenistan, we are prepared to increase the volume of power supplied to Afghanistan many-fold. As in the past, we provide purpose-oriented training of specialists for the Afghan economy, health care and social spheres. We will continue to provide all-encompassing help to the fraternal Afghan people. It is our principled position.

Turkmenistan believes that the irreversible nature of the disarmament process is the most important prerequisite for the peaceful and creative development of the region and the establishment of a climate of trust, openness and cooperation in Central Asia. Our country proceeds from the assumption that the inert model of the past century, which was based on the constant build-up of armaments, has become irrelevant in today's world. Furthermore, it considerably hampers and sometimes directly undermines efforts by States towards social and economic development, the enhancement of people's standards of living, and the development of successful economic cooperation. It is our conviction that the fewer weapons there are in the world, the more stable and peaceful its development will be, and the more trust and understanding among countries and peoples will deepen.

We call for consistent strengthening of international and regional cooperation in reducing the arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and the effective implementation of the non-proliferation regime. As a

party to the basic disarmament treaties and conventions of the United Nations, Turkmenistan intends to continue to provide support to all the relevant processes.In this connection, while emphasizing the landmark nature of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that was held in Vienna in 2012, Turkmenistan believes that it is key to continue the current dialogue on measures aimed at expanding the international legal framework of non-proliferation.

This dialogue becomes especially relevant in view of the practical steps that are being taken in order to implement the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. Our country stands ready to engage in constructive disarmament cooperation with the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and to participate in the implementation of a number of initiatives in this regard. One of the practical steps in the implementation of measures for disarmament could be the improvement of existing United Nations structures. In this context, we believe that it will be useful to consider the establishment of a United Nations subregional disarmament centre in Central Asia.

Turkmenistan looks forward to the logical continuation at this session of the broad-based dialogue on energy security as one of the fundamental elements of the United Nations sustainable development strategy initiated by the President of Turkmenistan. As is well known, in May 2013 the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 67/263 entitled "Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation". The resolution was sponsored by 71 Member States. The adoption of the resolution was yet another major and consecutive step in advancing international cooperation in the sphere of energy. We believe that adherence to the letter and spirit of that document should acquire a substantive and purpose-oriented nature.

In this connection, we call on Member States and the Secretariat to actively undertake consultations on the practical implementation of the provisions of this resolution. In particular, we note the institutionalization of the work of the international group of experts on energy cooperation and nominating representatives of Member States to that group. In December, the first international meeting of experts will take place in Turkmenistan. It is designed to launch systematic work on the establishment of a new legal framework of cooperation in sustainable energy. We invite Member States and all interested parties to take part in it.

The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), emphasizes the central role of transport and mobility in sustainable development. We fully share that approach. Moreover, Turkmenistan is convinced that it is high time to undertake systematic global cooperation and strategic planning in transport as a separate, long-term area of United Nations activity.

In early September, Turkmenistan's capital hosted a high-level international conference dedicated to the role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation, stability and sustainable development. The Ashgabat Declaration adopted at the end of the Conference reflects the need to develop new modern criteria for cooperation in this sphere that are oriented towards diversification, security, accessibility, environmental safety of the transportation infrastructure, and its maximum correspondence to the realities of current global development, taking into account the needs of developing countries, including landlocked States. As the President of Turkmenistan emphasized in his address to the participants at that conference, the global transport strategy of the twenty-first century is a strategy for integration, combining geographical and infrastructural opportunities with the technical and technological potentials of States and regions.

The very fact of the convening of that conference was a momentous event, signalling a comprehensive approach to the development of transport and transit corridors based on constructive and real partnerships. Our country has submitted the Ashgabat Declaration to the Secretariat for its distribution among Member States as an official document. We hope that it will be studied with interest and that there will be further use of this Declaration in international agreements, including those of the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly.

With a view to the accelerated development of international transport infrastructure, Turkmenistan advocates closer cooperation and partnerships with specialized bodies of the United Nations, first and foremost the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. We are convinced that such cooperation corresponds to the logic of modern development and

international cooperation in transport in the Eurasian continent.

Turkmenistan fully supports the decisions taken during the Summits on Climate Change held in Copenhagen and Cancún, at the seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Durban, and at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. We look forward to the continuation of constructive international dialogue on these issues. We are convinced that it is necessary to consistently combine efforts at the international, regional and national levels. In this context, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to implement the agreed-upon decisions and his sense of utmost responsibility in his approach to international cooperation with respect to climate change issues. Our country recently launched a number of specific initiatives aimed at enhancing regional and global cooperation in this sphere.

I wish to single out Turkmenistan's humanitarian efforts as a member of major United Nations humanitarian agencies. Turkmenistan takes practical steps to ensure the rights and freedoms of its citizens. In particular, our country devotes major attention to solving issues relating to the rights of refugees, migrants and stateless persons. Last June, in our capital, the Government of Turkmenistan, along with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, organized the International Conference on Migration and Statelessness. Upon its conclusion, the Conference adopted a declaration that spells out urgent tasks to improve multilateral cooperation, strengthen international legal frameworks, and reform national legislation on migrants andstateless persons and their legal and social protection, material support and adaptation. Turkmenistan will endeavour at this session to translate the main provisions of this outcome document into reality. We reaffirm our desire and readiness to continue close cooperation with the IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Member States and all stakeholders.

Our country views the sixty-ninth session as a major step towards consolidating international efforts to resolve key issues on the global agenda, to reaffirm the leading role of the United Nations in maintaining and strengthening universal peace and stability and to agree on sustainable development goals. We reaffirm our strong commitment to cooperation with the United Nations, our readiness to actively participate and promote its peacekeeping, political and diplomatic endeavours and to implement its projects and programmes in the economic, social, environmental, humanitarian and other spheres.

For Turkmenistan, partnership with the United Nations has been and continues to be a strategic priority, a conceptual and practical foundation for our activities in the international arena.

The meeting rose at 10 p.m.